



STATE OF CONNECTICUT • COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES APRIL 11, 2012

PRESENT: Chairman Chris Todd, David Hurley, Stanislav Moline, Sean Kelly and Alternate Gilbert Gamboa

ABSENT: Charles McCleary and Alternate Stefanie Cunningham

STAFF

PRESENT: Lisa Houlihan, Assistant Town Planner/Wetlands Agent/Zoning Official; and Kristin Michaud, Recording Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Todd called the Economic Development Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE

III. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Report: Tax Abatement

- a. Email from Leo Miller, Board of Selectman, to Maurice Blanchette, First Selectman, dated March 7, 2012, regarding the current Tax Abatement Policy.

Lisa Houlihan, Assistant Town Planner/Wetlands Agent/Zoning Official, reviewed Selectman Miller's email with the Commission.

Commissioner Kelly noted that Kloter opened up another shop in Town, as a result of the fire, that will stay in operation generating more revenue.

The current policy under which Kloter submitted an application for tax abatement was reviewed. Ms. Houlihan noted that Rick Cleary, Board of Finance, expressed concern for the abatement granted to Kloter with Robert Phillips, Town Planner. Mr. Phillips sent out a question on LISTSERVE (created for planning/land use officials throughout the State of Connecticut to share information) seeking other towns' abatement programs. From the responses Ms. Houlihan compiled a database for the Commission to review which breaks down the aspects of the different programs. Chairman Todd noted that all programs have wording that includes keeping existing businesses or the expansion of them. The Abatement fits them due to the fire itself and forcing them to convert the warehouse to sales.

Commissioner Hurley suggested getting more specific as far as expansion aspects of the policy.

It was noted that under *Purpose* it states retention of existing businesses and under *General Information* of the policy it states that "In the event of unusual or extraordinary circumstances, the Board of Selectmen (BOS) reserves the right to alter or waive any of the foregoing provisions."

The Commission concurred that the Kloter application followed the current policy and noted the final say went to the BOS. The abatement application for Kloters was under consideration before the EDC for three months.

Ms. Houlihan noted the selectmen in attendance the night of the BOS meeting. She noted that only Selectman Miller raised any concerns. He spoke to insurances Kloters may have had to cover their losses, but other selectmen noted that consideration of insurance coverages is not part of the current policy. There were no other concerns from the BOS for the abatement and Selectman Miller was the only dissenting vote.

Commissioner Gifford questioned the Target Industries section of the policy.

Commissioner Hurley asked what Target Industries meant. He noted that it appears in having Target Industries that others are being discriminated against and noted if that the section is restrictive it should be redefined. Noting the different categories listed in the Target Industry section discussion ensued as to what type of business would qualify for the categories listed and expressed the need to define them. The consensus is that the Target Industries should be defined and the policy should stand on its own.

Chairman Todd asked if the Commission should provide an explanation regarding the Kloter Abatement and let the BOS know the Commission is willing to re-evaluate the policy.

Ms. Houlihan will send the Commission copies of the full abatement policies the Planning Department received from other towns. Any replies should be addressed to staff only and shared at the next meeting.

Commissioner Kelly will write the letter to the BOS on behalf of the EDC.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

IV.UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Report: Agricultural Initiatives

Ms. Houlihan noted that Peter Charter, Charter Acres, has approached the BOS asking them to look into the program. Mr. Houlihan noted the latest memo from the Town Assessor to Maurice Blanchette, First Selectman, outlining what it would take to get the process going. Mr. Charter was expected to be in attendance this evening to ask that the EDC members attend the upcoming BOS meeting to support a decision on this matter.

This matter has been an item of consideration on the BOS and EDC agenda since the legislation passed enabling the exemption. The EDC has consistently expressed their support, but a decision has yet to be rendered by the BOS to adopt or not to adopt such a program. She encouraged EDC members to attend the upcoming meeting of the BOS if they wanted to express their input on this matter.

The Commission suggested Mr. Charter get the other farmers involved as well.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

3 Report: Business Surveys and Site Visits

Ms. Houlihan discussed with the Commission the business visit with Kelly Fradet. Commissioner Kelly stated that David Weeks is looking to make Route 83 a community corridor.

Ms. Houlihan noted that upcoming visits include; Ellington Ridge Country Club on Tuesday, April 17th at 4 pm with Commissioner Hurley, a visit to Dzen on April 19th at 11:00 am and another one at Country Pure Foods on May 3rd at 3 pm and asked if any other Commissioner's were interested in attending and if they are available to contact her. Commissioner Todd noted that he will attend the business visit with Dzen.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

4. Report: Business Directory/Virtual Welcome Wagon

Ms. Houlihan stated that this item was on hold until budget decision, noting the intern appropriate request to assist with startup tasks for a business directory.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

5. Report: Tax Incentive Programs

Nothing to report, at this time.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

6. Report: Current Economic Activity

Ms. Houlihan noted the recent Small Business Workshop she attended and the information supplied by the DECD regarding small businesses tax incentives programs. This information will be shared with business owners during business visits.

Ms. Houlihan also noted that the old Ellington Auto located on 3-7 Jobs Hill Road has been replaced by A-1 Snowplowing and Landscaping. They are currently in the application process before Planning and Zoning.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. Approval of the March 14, 2012, regular meeting minutes.

MOVED (KELLY), SECONDED (MOLINE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE MARCH 14, 2012, MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN.

2. Election of Officers (Chairman and Vice Chairman)

MOVED (HURLEY), SECONDED (GAMBOA) TO NOMINATE SEAN KELLY AS CHAIRMAN OF THE EDC, NOMINATION ACCEPTED AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED (HURLEY), SECONDED (GAMBOA) TO NOMINATE CHRISTOPHER TODD AS VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE EDC, NOMINATION ACCEPTED AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. Correspondence:

- a. Letter to the EDC dated, February 9, 2012 from CEDAS. (2012 Membership)
(TABLED FROM THE MARCH 14, 2012 MEETING)

MOVED (TODD), SECONDED (HURLEY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE 2012 CEDAS MEMBERSHIP.

- b. Approved Mission Statement. **So noted**
- c. Rock Cats Community Nights fundraising campaign.

The Commission reviewed the campaign. They are interested in looking at the program for 2013. They questioned concerns with what the fundraiser funds should support.

- d. Yankeeegas: Expanding Access to Natural Gas in CT; request for stakeholder support.

Yankee Gas approached the Planning Department to seek stakeholder support for their expansion plans. The Commission expressed their support but wanted to be co-authors of a stakeholder letter with PZC.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (TODD), SECONDED (HURLEY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Kristin Michaud
Recording Secretary